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**STATEMENT BY  
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS  
TO THE OSCE AT THE 987th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 March 2014

**In response to the statement by Mr. Erion Veliaj,  
Minister of Youth and Social Welfare of Albania**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, I should like to thank the Minister of Youth and Social Welfare of Albania for his detailed statement and presentation of his country's policy for promoting gender equality.

For my part, I should like to mention that the fourth Action Plan to Safeguard Gender Equality in succession is currently being implemented in our country. The National Council for Gender Policy works actively within the Council of Ministers. Expert working groups have been set up in all regions to study the implementation of gender policy.

The parliamentary elections to the National Assembly of Belarus in 2012 saw the election of 49 women, or around 30 per cent of the total number of deputies. In the last five years representation by women in executive bodies has increased substantially. Women now account for 55 per cent of public servants at all levels. Occupation by women of leading positions in the State administration has grown significantly. Moreover, women make up more than half of the staff of community organizations.

The Belarusian authorities are paying particular attention to the employment of women, provision of social assistance while searching for employment, and professional training and business development. As a result of these measures, the percentage of unemployed women in Belarus has dropped to 42 per cent.

As part of its gender policy, Belarus pays particular attention to preventing domestic violence and studies best practices in other countries to solve this problem. An international seminar entitled "Responding to violence against women: the role of the police" organized by the United Nations Population Fund with the financial support of the OSCE was held in Minsk on 28 and 29 January 2014. A particular focus of the event was the creation of a mechanism for cross-sectoral co-operation to ensure the safety of victims of domestic violence.

To conclude my statement, I should like to congratulate all women in advance on a memorable occasion: International Women's Day on 8 March.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.